

## Award to Help Purchase Search Enhancing Equipment and Protective Gear for Firefighters

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) announced today that the Huntingtown Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad has been awarded \$94,410 in federal grant funds through the 2009 Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program. The funding will be utilized for personal protective equipment and a Thermal Imaging Camera to enhance search capabilities through fire and smoke for trapped persons.

“I am pleased to announce another installment of fire grant funding that has directed more than \$57 million to Maryland communities over the last nine years,” said Congressman Hoyer. “This federal funding provides a direct community benefit, enhancing the ability of first responders to protect the public and themselves.

Fire fighters and first responders are a vital resource to every community - this assistance is the least we can do to show our appreciation for their heroic service.”

Grant funds made available through the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program are awarded to fire departments and EMS organizations across the nation to enhance their response capabilities and to more effectively protect the health and safety of the public and emergency response personnel. Since 2001, AFG has provided more than \$57 million in assistance to first-responder organizations in Maryland for training and the purchase of personnel protective gear and response equipment and vehicles.

Huntingtown VFD Chief Jonathan Riffe said, “The safety and well-being of our emergency responders is paramount. Without the appropriate equipment, our responders and citizens would be useless to our mission. Fortunately, this federal grant money will aid us tremendously. Included in the grant are 25 sets of fire personal protective equipment (helmets, hoods, gloves, jackets, pants and boots), 50 sets of EMS personal protective equipment (bloodborne pathogen resistant and ANSI approved) and a Thermal Imaging Camera to search through fire and smoke for trapped persons.”

As co-chair of the Congressional Fire Caucus, Rep. Hoyer took a lead role in helping establish the AFG Program and has been an annual leader in securing funding. This year, the program will award \$565 million to assist first responders nationwide.

Congressman Hoyer also helped establish the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Firefighters (SAFER) Program to help fire departments hire new firefighters, recruit and retain volunteer firefighters, and provide relief to stations currently operating short of staff. Maryland has received more than \$6.65 million in SAFER assistance to help meet staffing needs.

“It is critical that first responders are provided all available resources to enhance their ability to protect our communities from harm. I will continue to fully support these programs in order to meet the needs of our nation’s firefighters,” concluded Hoyer.

For more information on grants available to fire departments and emergency responders, visit <http://www.firegrant-support.com/>. This site also offers resources to help fire departments prepare and submit grant requests.

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